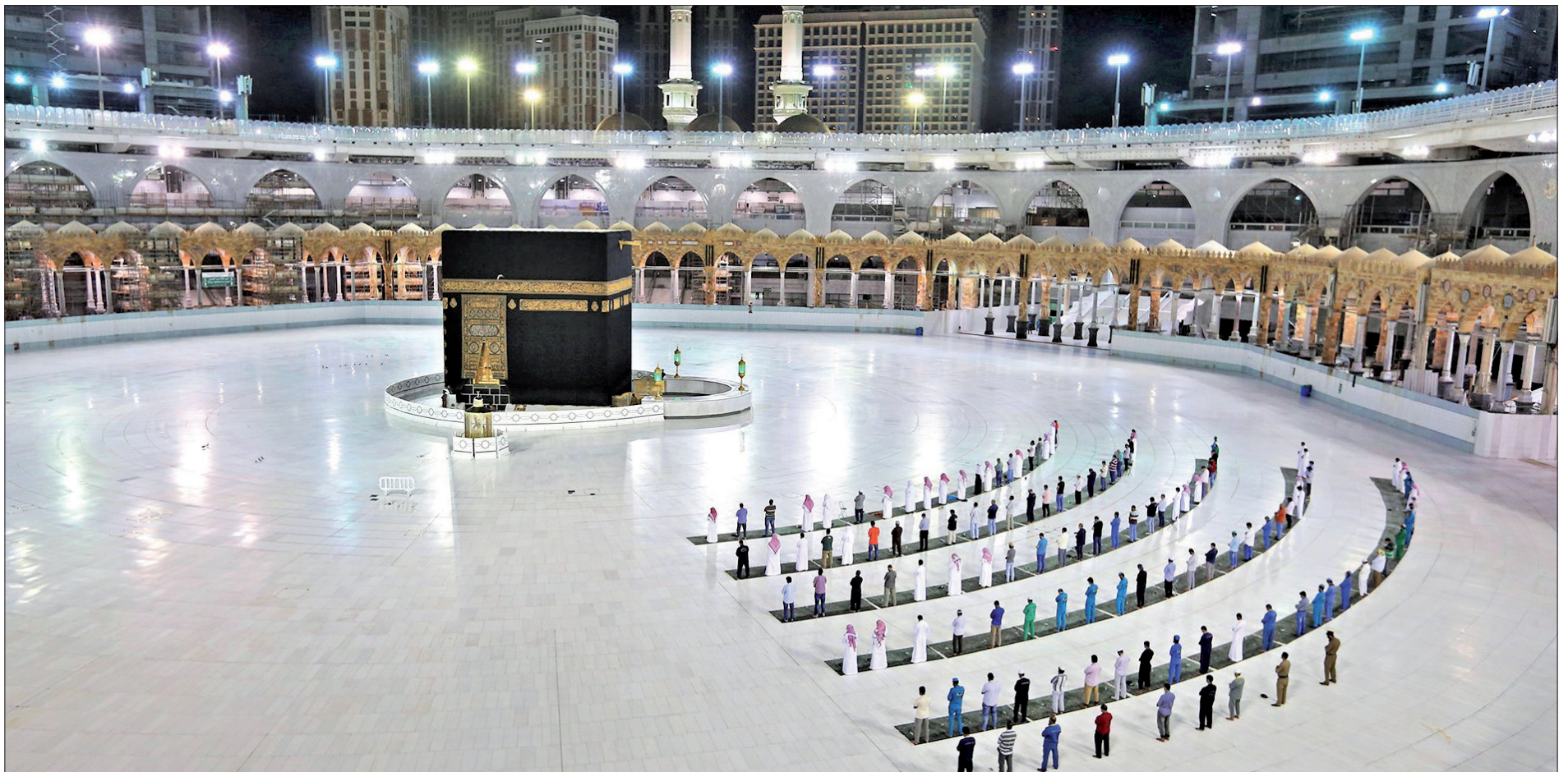


FRIDAY, 31ST JULY, 2020 | EID-UL AD'HAA MESSAGE FROM MAJLISUL ULAMA ZIMBABWE



The Grand Masjid in Makkah with a limited congregation, practicing social distancing during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Eid-ul Ad'haa message from Majlisul Ulama Zimbabwe

Council of Islamic Scholars

The Eid-ul Ad'haa (Festival of Sacrifice) – is a commemoration of the devotion, dedication, commitment and sacrifice of the Great Patriarch of all Monotheistic faiths – Abraham (peace be upon him). Today being the tenth day of the last Month of the Islamic calendar Dhul Hijjah, which is actually the month of the Pilgrimage (Haji), is the day on which Muslims the world over re-enact the sacrifice of Abraham (peace be upon him).

Truly speaking, his service and duty to The Almighty was unparalleled as he sacrificed in every manner with strong determination and firm resolve. He was selfless in all that he did and never for a moment did he swerve from duty by selfishness or desire for personal gain. He realised that success and achievement are not measured by the aimless, tireless pursuit and acquisition of worldly fame, material possessions, real estate, etc. or by an outer show of pomp and glory! Rather, by the rich inner qualities of faith, submission, sincerity and devotion to The Owner of the Universe, God Almighty. Achieving the happiness and pleasure of and recognition from The Almighty is what is all important. After all every

human will surely return to Him and stand to account for every action and deed carried out during this earthly stay.

This commemoration, by us today is really meant to liberate our souls from the clutches of materialism, uplift our spirituality, empower us in the true and real sense, and turn around our situation individually and collectively. Definitely these benefits are not promised for lifeless and thoughtless rituals alone. They

will be ours if our actions are informed by the true meaning and message of Sacrifice.

Undoubtedly, the greatest lesson to be learnt is that everything that we “have”, or “own” is actually a gift and a bestowment from none other than The Almighty Himself and we should be ready to give up any or all of it for His sake. Unfortunately our greed and selfishness, when it comes to the material things of this life, actually push us away

from our Creator and as a result we fall deeper and deeper into

The endless and futile pursuit of happiness in sensory pleasures has left the majority of humankind in a mess and tangle!

the materialistic, self-gratifying, carefree culture that has literally engulfed almost the entire globe! The endless and futile pursuit of happiness in sensory pleasures has left the majority of humankind in a mess and tangle!

Every effort and sacrifice is being made, in all spheres of human life, to improve the “quality” of this earthly life with very little or no regard for the coming life of eternity. Hence, one finds wholesale compromise of the basic moral and ethical values, at all levels of society, merely to gain “more” - be it more wealth, more power, more control (authority and dominance), more sensory pleasure, etc!

It is important that we engage in some deep soul searching in order to rediscover the beauty of the inner self and re-orientate ourselves, in sincere worship and service to our Creator. This will help us keep focus on the correct direction of life and it's priorities and will surely strengthen our relationship with our Creator as well as with our fellow humans.

The Majlisul Ulama Zimbabwe, would like to take this opportunity to convey our heartiest greetings and best wishes to all Muslims and our fellow compatriots on this Auspicious Occasion of Eid-ul Ad'haa.

Prophet Abraham - the father of all monotheistic faiths

One of the Divine Messengers given the most attention in the Holy Qur'aan is the Great Messenger of God Almighty, Abraham (peace be upon him). The Holy Qur'aan tells of him and his unwavering belief in God Almighty, first calling him to reject his people and their idolatry, and later to prove true to various tests which God Almighty placed before him. In Islam, Abraham is seen as a strict monotheist who called his people to the worship of God Almighty alone. For this belief, he bore great hardships, even disassociating himself with his family and people through migration to various lands. He fulfilled the various commandments of God Almighty through which he was

tested, proving true to each one. Due to this strength of faith, the Holy Qur'aan attributes the one and only true religion to be the “Path of Abraham”, even though prophets before him, such as Noah (peace be upon him), called to the same faith. Because of his tireless act of obedience to God Almighty, He gave him the special title of “Khaleel”, or beloved servant, not given to any other Prophet before. Due to the excellence of Abraham, God Almighty made prophets from his progeny, from them Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob (Israel) and Moses (peace be upon them all), guiding people to the truth. The lofty status of Abraham is one shared by Judaism, Christianity

and Islam alike. The Jews see him to be the epitome of virtue as he fulfilled all the commandments although before they were revealed, and was the first to come to the realisation of the One True God Almighty. He is seen as the father of the chosen race, the father of Prophets due to which God Almighty started his series of revelations. In Christianity, he is seen as the father of all Believers (Romans 4:11) and his trust in God Almighty and his sacrifice are taken as a model for later saints (Hebrews 11). As Abraham is given such importance, it is worthy that one study his life and investigate those aspects which raised him to the level which God Almighty gave him.

Love of material (worldly) wealth!

The Last & Final Messenger of Allah, Prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him), on one occasion, concerning worldly or material wealth, declared: “Blind love for worldly pleasures is the main cause of all evil.”

Indeed, when one develops a passionate love for someone or something, they tend to be prepared to do anything and everything to show and express that love. Here we are being taught not to allow our love for worldly matters to enslave us in such a way that we overlook justice and give up our sound values and morals. Striving to fulfil our passions and desires at any cost, especially those which are unlawful, will surely lead us to some wrong doing.

Love for wealth, status, power, social acceptance, etc. if not controlled, will result in the engagement of all forms of evil – bribery, corruption, deception, fraud, looting, kidnapping, etc. This is because one will do anything and everything they think of in order to achieve his/her goal - without even looking into whether it is lawful or not, whether it infringes the rights of others or not, etc.

However, if one has the ability to recognise the evil, shun it and control his/her unlawful desires, then he will succeed in striking the correct balance between the limits of love and justice together with the appropriate values and morals.

It is rather obvious, as we look around community and society today – and indeed the world - that almost all evil, injustice and oppression is committed due the lack of control of one’s own passions and unlawful desires.

Hope in the mercy of The Almighty

Hope in the mercy of the Almighty is the most sublime rank for the Believer. In essence, the Believer’s relationship with his Creator, God Almighty, is characterised both by fear and hope, such that the former deters him from sins and disobedience, whereas the latter drives him towards good deeds.

Allah Almighty praises those who maintain hope in Him, and declares: “There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent pattern for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Last Day and [who] remembers Allah often.” [Holy Qur’aan, Ch 33 : v 21]

It has also been narrated by Prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him) that Allah Almighty says: “O son of Adam, If you supplicate to Me, expecting My forgiveness, I will forgive you however great or many your sins may be.”



Special food relief & blanket distribution by Majlisul Ulama Zimbabwe in rural areas.

Special Food Relief Programme Winter / Blanket distribution

During the subsequent phases of the special food relief programme carried out by Majlisul Ulama Zimbabwe (Council of Islamic Scholars) across the country, a further 8,000 families were assisted with food hampers comprising an array of basic commodities (including mealie meal, rice, macaroni, flour, cooking oil, sugar, salt, soya, kapenta, beans, milk powder, as well as bathing and washing soap). With the onset of the winter, blankets were also distributed together with the hampers – which brought an extra smile to the faces of the beneficiaries!

The extended national lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic has indeed had a huge impact on the income and livelihoods of the most vulnerable and the unemployed sections of the community especially in the rural and outlying areas.

As pledged previously, our teams of officials and volunteers ventured even further to the more distant towns, villages and rural settlements – at times going deep into some of the remote parts of different provinces - in response to the dire need for assistance and supplementary support. Areas as remote as Chiwhiti, Kabidza, Kasimure, Tsikada, Mapere, etc were covered as well as smaller towns and settlements like Kariba, Buhera, Masiyarwa, Chinyika Gutu, Raffingora, etc. to mention but a few. It goes without saying that in all instances, the great happiness and joy of the beneficiaries could not be contained as they expressed their hearty, profound appreciation and gratitude – at times even spontaneously breaking out in to song!

It has been very touching to reach out to these commu-

The total tally of the families served to date comes up to just over 14,000

nities where many seem to feel that they are simply left out and forgotten.

As before, our teams effected the distribution in collaboration with the relevant local authorities like the Councillor, Village Chief, Sabhuku, Health officials, Police officers, etc. In each instance, every effort has been made to uphold the covid-19 health guidelines & requirements of social distancing, hand sanitising, mask protection, etc.

Since Majlisul Ulama Zimbabwe (Council of Islamic

Scholars) embarked on this special relief programme, (early April 2020), the total tally of the families served to date comes up to just over 14,000, spanning across a total of almost 150 towns / settlements / etc. Indeed, we must acknowledge that this has only been possible by the great help of The Almighty; the generous donations and contributions of the numerous donors and well-wishers; the sterling efforts of our officials and volunteers; and the wonderful co-operation of local authorities, health officials as well as well as the the police and security agencies.

Currently, our teams have taken a short break in order to facilitate for the Annual Sacrifice (mentioned elsewhere in this supplement) and they will hopefully resume soon thereafter, depending on the situation.

His Paradise ...”

Abdullaah ibn Mas’ood, one of the close companions of Prophet Muahmmmed (peace be upon him), once remarked, “The most encouraging verse in the Holy Qur’aan is in the Chapter Az-Zumar (The Groups); Allah Almighty says “Say, ‘O My servants who have transgressed against themselves [by sinning], do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Indeed, Allah forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful.’ .” [Holy Qur’aan, Ch 39 : v 53]

Glory be to Allah The Almighty! If those who turn away from Him only know how He waits for their return and how Merciful He is to them, they will long for Him immensely. Indeed, if this is His mercy and forgiveness towards such people, how will He be to those who constantly remember Him and always draw near to Him!?

Greetings to one and all on the ocasion of the Muslim festival, marking the sacrifice of Eid al Ad’haa.



What is the origin of Hajj (Pilgrimage)?

Hajj literally means ‘to set out for a place’. Islamically, however, it refers to the annual pilgrimage that Muslims make to the Holy City of Makkah, in Saudi Arabia, with the intention of performing certain religious rites in accordance with the practices of the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) as taught and prescribed by the Prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him).

The Hajj, or pilgrimage to Makkah, a central duty of Islam whose origins date back to the Prophet Abraham, brings together Muslims of all races and tongues for one of life’s most moving spiritual experiences.

For over 14 centuries, countless millions of Muslims, men and women from the four corners of the earth, have made the pilgrimage to Makkah, the birthplace of Islam. In carrying out this obligation, they fulfill one of the five “pillars” of Islam, or central religious duties of the Believer.

Muslims trace the recorded origins of the divinely prescribed pilgrimage (Hajj) to the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him). According to the Holy Qur’aan, it was Abraham (peace be upon him) who, together with his Ishmael (peace be upon him) built the Ka’bah, “the House of God Almighty”, the direction toward which Muslims turn in their worship five times each day. It was Abraham (peace be upon him), too who established the sacraments and practices of the Hajj, which recall events or practices in his life and that of his wife Hagar and their son Ishmael.

In the chapter entitled “The Pilgrimage”, in the Holy Qur’aan, the Divine command to perform the Hajj and prophesies the permanence of this institution are declared thus:

“And when We assigned for Abraham the place of the House, saying ‘Do not associate anything with Me, and purify My House for those who go around it and for those who stand and bow and prostrate themselves in worship. And proclaim the Pilgrimage among humankind: They

will come to you on foot and on every lean camel, coming forth from every distant ravine.” (Ch 22 : v 26-27)

By the time the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), received the Divine call, pagan practices had come to distort some of the original observances of the Hajj. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), as ordained by God Almighty, continued the Abrahamic Hajj after restoring its sacraments and practices to their original purity.

The Hajj to Makkah is a once-in-a-lifetime obligation upon male and female adults whose health and means permit it, or, in the words of the Holy Qur’aan, upon “those who can make their way there.” It is not an obligation on children, though some children do accompany their parents on this journey.

The pilgrimage takes place each year between the 8th and the 13th days of Dhul-Hijjah, the 12th month of the Muslim lunar calendar.

As pilgrims of diverse races and tongues return to their homes, they carry with them cherished memories of Abraham, Ishmael, Hagar, and Muhammad (peace be upon them all). They will always remember that universal concourse, where poor and rich, black and white, young and old, met on equal footing.

They return with a sense of awe and serenity: awe for their experience at the open plain of Arafat, when they felt closest to God Almighty as they stood on the site where the Prophet (peace be upon him) delivered his sermon during his first and last pilgrimage; serenity for having shed their sins on that plain, and being thus relieved of such a heavy burden. They also return with a better understanding of the conditions of their brethren in Islam. Thus is born a spirit of caring for others and an understanding of their own rich heritage that will last throughout their lives.

The pilgrims go back radiant with hope and joy, for they have fulfilled God Almighty’s ancient injunction to humankind to undertake the pilgrimage.



A recently constructed masjid in Tsikada, Makoni North, Zimbabwe

The Concept of Sacrifice in Islam

There are many misconceptions in the mind of many non-Muslims who fail to perceive the significance and wisdom behind acts of worship in Islam.

The sacrifice of an animal is not a pillar of Islam. We must look at the occurrences in a contextual manner, understanding not only the pre-Islamic institution of sacrifice, the Qur’aanic reforms concerning this practice, and the continuance of sacrifice in the Muslim world, but also the context in which the Qur’aanic revelations occurred.

One only has to look at how the Holy Qur’aan treats this subject, to see a marked difference regarding sacrifice and whether or not Allah Almighty is appeased by blood. Actually, the Qur’aanic account of the sacrifice of Ismaeel, by Ibraheem (peace be upon them both), ultimately speaks against blood atonement. Allah Almighty says: “Then when (the son) reached (the age of) work (ie. maturity), he said ‘O my son. I see in vision that I offer you in sacrifice. Now see what is your view’. (The son) said ‘O my father. Do as you have been commanded. You will find me, if Allah wills, to be of those who are patient’. So when they both submitted their wills to Allah and he had laid him prostrate on his forehead for sacrifice We called out to him ‘O Ibraheem! you have already fulfilled the vision. Thus indeed we reward those who do right. So this was obviously a trial, then we ransomed him with a momentous sacrifice.” (Ch 37 : v 102-107)

Notice that the Qur’aanic version, quite different from the version in other scriptures,

records that Ibraheem (peace be upon him) had a dream in which he saw himself slaughtering his son Ismaeel. He believed the dream as being from Allah Almighty and by their (father & son) willingness to make the ultimate sacrifice: Ibraheem of his son; Ismaeel of his own life - they are able to transcend notations of self and false attachment to the material realm, thus removing a veil between themselves and Allah Almighty, enabling the mercy of The Almighty to descend upon them as the spirit of truth and illuminate them with Divine wisdom.

As far as the yearly tradition has followed this event (that is sacrificing of an animal to commemorate this great sacrifice of father and son) we must understand it, and the Qur’aanic verses that pertain to animal sacrifice, in relation to the time, place and circumstances under which these revelations were received and how people were trying to make the personal sacrifice by sharing their limited means of survival with the poorer members of the communities. That is to say, the underlying implication of Islam’s’ attitude towards ritual slaughter is not of blood atonement or seeking favour with Allah through another’s death, but rather the act of thanking Allah Almighty for one’s sustenance and the personal sacrifice of sharing one’s possessions and valuable food with one’s fellow humans. The ritual itself is not the sacrifice. It is merely a method of taking the life of the creature of God Almighty where the individuals slaughter as quickly as possible and acknowledge that only Allah Almighty has

the right to take a life and that they now only do so as a humble member of Allah’s creation in need of sustenance just like every other species in Allah’s creation.

Further, Allah Almighty says “It is not their meat nor their blood that reaches Allah, it is your piety that reaches Him. He has thus made them (animals) subject to you that you may glorify Allah for His guidance to you and proclaim the good news to all who do right. (Ch 22 : v 37)

Thus no one should suppose or even suggest that meat and blood is acceptable to the One True God. It was a pagan fancy that The Almighty could be appeased by blood sacrifice. But in reality, The Almighty accepts the “offering of our hearts”, and as a symbol of such offer some visible institution is necessary.

He has given us power over the brute creation, and permitted us to eat meat, but only if we pronounce His name at the solemn act of taking life - for without this solemn invocation, we are apt to forget the sacredness of life. By this invocation we are reminded that wanton cruelty cannot be in our thoughts, but only for purposes of food do we take this life.

It is quite clear from the Qur’aanic passages that the issue of animal sacrifice is in relation to the role animals play in the lives of humans - in that humans are commanded to give thanks to Allah Almighty and praise Him for the sustenance He has given them and that they should sacrifice something of value to themselves to demonstrate their appreciation for what they have been given.

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Slaughter of animals for food

Understanding the Islamic method known as ‘Halaal’

Introduction

In His Divine wisdom and mercy upon mankind, Allah Almighty, The Creator of the entire Universe who is The Supreme Sovereign, has given specific allowance for man to take the life of certain animals for purposes of food. He declares in the Holy Qur’aan: “And the cattle, He has created them for you..... and of them you eat....” (Ch 16 : v 5-8)

Even in the event that we would like to consume the flesh of an animal permitted for consumption by The Almighty, we do not have the right to use any cruel or inhumane method of taking the life of the animal. We must recall that Allah Almighty says that all creatures: “are communities like you.” Hence, human-kind must observe due care and attention when dealing with these creatures and grant full recognition of the “psychological needs” and “feelings” of these creatures at all times.

Various methods of slaughter

We find that there are various methods of slaughter used by different communities in different parts of the world. Interestingly, or rather very alarmingly, with the drive to mass produce food and the advancement of mechanised systems in

slaughter houses, man has largely compromised a good number of essential requirements pertaining to the most humane method of slaughter.

However, in this article we take a look at the Islamic method as laid down by The Almighty who is the Giver of Life - (which is also known as the “Halaal” method).

Requirements relating to the animal, prior to slaughter

1. The animal must be lawful to eat as declared by The Almighty. Only certain categories of herbivorous animals and several species of birds (fowl) are permitted. Carnivorous animals/animals of prey are not permitted for human consumption. Animals that feed on filth, etc are also not permitted.
2. The animal must obviously be alive, healthy, well fed, and not thirsty and it must be fully conscious prior to the slaughter.
3. The animal is only to be slaughtered for the purpose of food and no other reason.
4. The animal must be handled gently and individually – it should not be slaughtered in front of other animals.
5. The life is to be taken in the name of Allah Almighty, The Creator who gave the

life to this creature in the first instance.
Requirements relating to the slaughterer

1. The slaughterer must be a firm believer in the Oneness of the Almighty
2. The slaughterer must have a very clear understanding that life is sacred – even that of animals – and this life is only being taken by the express permission from The Almighty.
3. The slaughterer must be of a sound and clear mind and not under the influence of alcohol, drugs or any intoxicants.
4. The slaughterer must be trained in the job, with an awareness of what he is doing.

Requirements relating to the actual act of slaughter

1. The act of slaughter starts by pronouncing the name of Allah, The Creator; ‘Bismillah Allahu Akbar’ – Meaning: In the name of Allah, Allah is the greatest. This serves many important purposes:
 - a) First and foremost it is the fulfillment of the requirement of The Almighty, as He has declared in the Holy Qur’aan “And eat not of that upon which the name of Allah has not been mentioned for verily it is abomination.” (Ch6 : v121).
 - b) It is an express declaration of taking the permission of Allah Almighty.

c) It reminds the slaughterer that he is accountable and responsible before The Almighty.

d) It has a tremendous impact upon the animal, literally pacifying it as it ‘hears’ the name of The Supreme Sovereign – its Creator.

e) In fact, any action we do in our daily life should be commenced with the mention of the name of Allah, The Most Kind, The Most Merciful.

2. The slaughtering instrument must be razor sharp - (it should be kept like a surgeon’s knife in sharpness and cleanliness). In the event of its dullness, it should not be sharpened in front of the animal.

3. A deep swift cut must be effected instantaneously and quickly to the neck of the animal, severing the following vessels:

- a) the blood vessels of the neck which include the two carotid arteries which carry blood to the brain and head and the two jugular veins which bring blood from the brain back to the heart;
- b) the trachea (windpipe) and
- c) the oesophagus (gullet). It is important that the central nervous system (the spinal cord) should be kept safe and intact (not cut).

Some Common Questions About Hajj

What is meant the Hajj?

Actually, in accordance with the Islamic requirements, one of the five pillars of faith, prescribes as a duty that Muslims go on Pilgrimage -Hajj – to Makkah, Saudi Arabia, at least once during their lifetime, on condition they have the financial and physical means to be able to do so.

What is done in the Hajj?

The Hajj (Pilgrimage) consists of several important acts of worship, meant to symbolise the essential concepts of the Islamic faith, and to commemorate the trials of the Great Messenger of Allah- Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) and his family. The pilgrimage also enables Muslims from all around the world, of different cultures, languages, races, and ethnicities, to come together in a spirit of universal brotherhood and sisterhood to worship the One God together.

When is the Hajj carried out?

Hajj is observed during the Islamic month of Dhul-Hijjah, which is the last month of the Islamic calendar. The main acts of worship and duty, for the Hajj (Pilgrimage) are carried out over a period of 5 days.

What is the Islamic calendar?

The Islamic calendar is based on the Lunar calendar. It comprises of twelve months with each month beginning at sunset on the day

when the lunar crescent first appears after the new moon, and can be sighted by the unaided eye . Visibility depends on a large number of factors including weather condition, the altitude of the moon at sunset, the closeness of the moon to the sun at sunset, the interval between sunset and moonset, atmospheric pollution, the quality of the eyesight of the observer, etc. As a result, although the phases of the moon can be predicted accurately, the moon’s visibility at a given place on Earth cannot be accurately estimated in advance.

So do Muslims worship the moon?

No not at all! Sadly, this is not only a major mis-conception, but actually in some instances it is intentionally spread by so-called men of the cloth only to discredit Islam and the Muslims – yet Islam upholds the pure monotheistic beliefs and practices conveyed by all the Messengers/ Prophets of The Almighty.

The only role the moon plays in the life of a Muslim is the fact that it’s new crescent heralds the commencement of the new month – just like in old times, the folk would count the months by checking the phases of the moon (even at present in many rural areas the folk follow the Lunar calendar and not the Solar one).

Muslims do not and cannot pray ‘to’ or even ‘through’ the moon (or for that matter any other celestial body, object, humans, spirits, etc.). Muslims do not even pray to the Ka’bah, which is in Makkah, in any way whatsoever.

Prayer, worship, service and submission is to The One and Only Supreme Being, The Creator, Sustainer, Noursiher and Cherisher of the entire Universe – Allah Almighty.

What is the Ka’bah?

This is a cubed like structure which was originally built by Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) as a house of worship. He was instructed by Allah Almighty to build it and then upon completion, circumbulate it (go around it) in devotion to Allah Almighty. Muslims emulate this practice to this day and observe the circumbulation when they go Hajj (Pilgrimage). This is done not as an act of worship to the Ka’bah but as an act of emulating Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) in devotion and service to Allah Almighty.

So why do Muslim face Makkah when praying?

As mentioned above it was built by Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) as a place of worship. Muslims have been instructed to use it a focal point not only for the Hajj (Pilgrimage) but also for their daily prayers. So wherever a Muslim may be, when he/she observes prayer, they will face the direction of the Ka’bah in Makkah so as to observe uniformity and solidarity and portray an underlying unity with all other Muslims across the globe. Muslims do not worship the Ka’bah nor do they pray ‘to’ it or ‘through’ it.

For further information on Islam and/or a free copy of The Holy Qur’aan, please contact:

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